

2025

NYC HOUSING
TRACKER REPORT

SPECIAL UPDATE:

Why Charter Land Use Reforms Are Needed

Oct. 2025

INTRODUCTION

In November, New Yorkers will vote on changes to the city's land use review process proposed by the New York City Charter Revision Commission. This special update of the NYC Housing Tracker will explain the housing-related ballot questions and place them within the context of key data on the land use review process, the city's affordable housing crisis, and the distribution of affordable housing throughout the five boroughs. Four years into reporting on affordable housing distribution, we continue to see the same neighborhoods not producing affordable housing, highlighting the need for reform. The housing-related ballot measures will speed up the development of housing and remove barriers to developing affordable housing in certain neighborhoods.

NYC
HOUSING TRACKER

The New York Housing Conference produces the annual **NYC Housing Tracker**, breaking down affordable housing and other important housing data by City Council district. We have released four previous reports, most recently analyzing data through calendar year 2024. This report is updated with the latest affordable housing production, including new data from January through June 2025 – six months of additional data.¹

¹ Some historical numbers in this report from 2014 – 2024 will be different than in the previous report. HPD periodically revises historical data to take into account new information on and changes to projects.

Housing Ballot Questions

#2

Affordable Housing
Fast Track

#3

Expedited Land Use
Review Procedure
(ELURP)

#4

Affordable Housing
Appeals Board

#5

Digitized City Map



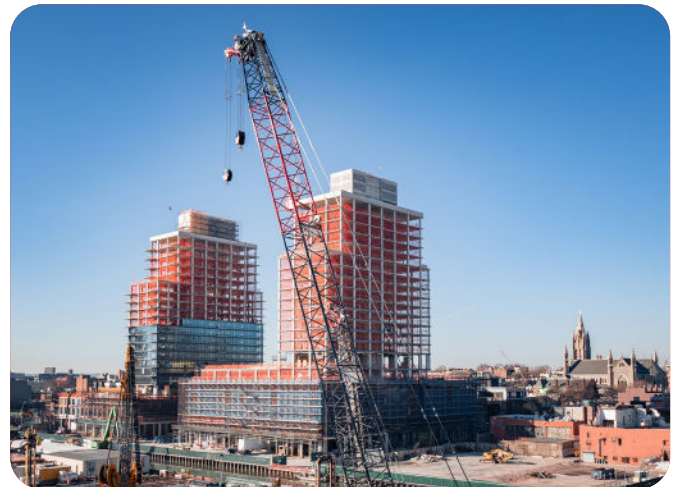
AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONSTRUCTION

JAN. 2014 - JUNE 2025

Affordable housing over the past 11 ½ years is a story of tremendous disparity, with significant development of affordable housing in some neighborhoods and minimal development in others.

During this time, 13 districts have produced more than 4,000 units of new affordable housing, with three districts producing more than 7,000 affordable units in total. These districts are located in the Bronx, central and eastern Brooklyn, waterfront Brooklyn and Queens, eastern Queens, and East Harlem in Manhattan. The top-producing districts are building the majority of new housing. The top 10 districts out of 51 total districts produced 53 percent of all of the new affordable housing citywide over the past 11 ½ years while Council District 15 produced 8,267 affordable units, more housing than the bottom 21 districts combined.

Meanwhile, 10 districts have produced fewer than 300 units of new affordable housing over the past 11 ½ years, with four districts producing fewer than 100 units over that time. These districts are located in eastern and central Queens, southern and eastern Brooklyn, and Staten Island.



JAN. - JUNE 2025

Over the past six months, the top 10 districts for affordable housing production saw on average 454 new units of affordable housing.

The top producing district – District 47 in Brooklyn – saw 706 units of new affordable housing financed in the first six months of 2025. Meanwhile, the bottom 10 districts produced just 7 units in total, less than

one new unit of affordable housing per district on average over the six months – all of which is likely homeowner assistance. Four districts saw no new affordable housing over that time.

The bottom line is that too many Council Districts are failing to add affordable housing to address the historic housing crisis New York City is facing.

REFORMS PROPOSED TO NYC CHARTER TO ADDRESS HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

The New York City Charter Revision Commission convened with special instructions, “*How to make New York City’s municipal government more transparent and responsive to the needs of city residents, especially when it comes to promoting fair housing across the five boroughs.*” Rising prices and the lack of housing options underscore the need for policies that increase housing supply and affordability. The vacancy rate for rental housing in 2023 was 1.41 percent, the lowest in 50 years.ⁱ Not only does lack of housing options drive up rents, it forces renters to pay far more than they can afford- nearly 500,000 households pay more than half of their income on rent.ⁱⁱ

After a months-long public review process with public input from all five boroughs, the Commission proposed charter changes that will make it easier and faster to build affordable housing.

THE UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW PROCEDURE (ULURP)



The Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) can be a long and expensive process which delays housing development and adds costs. ULURP is the public review process for changes to land use, including changing the zoning of a particular lot or multiple lots in a neighborhood and disposition of city-owned land. While most housing development in the city (80%) is built as-of-right and does not go through ULURPⁱⁱⁱ, over the last decade 19,000 affordable homes sponsored by the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) went through the process.

The ULURP timeline begins when a project is certified. Projects can spend 2 years or more before getting officially certified. Once a project is certified, ULURP has specific time periods for each party to review the proposal. The timeline, described above, starts with Community Board review, followed by the Borough President and Borough Board review, then to the City Planning Commission (CPC), followed by the City Council. CPC and the City Council can modify, approve or disapprove the proposal. Changes by the City Council send the proposal back to the CPC for 15 days. The mayor can veto the City Council proposal, and the City Council can override the mayor’s veto with a 2/3 supermajority vote.

ⁱ 2023 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey, Selected Initial Findings.
<https://www.nyc.gov/assets/hpd/downloads/pdfs/about/2023-nychvs-selected-initial-findings.pdf>

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<https://www.nyc.gov/assets/hpd/downloads/pdfs/about/2023-nychvs-selected-initial-findings.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Info Brief: How much housing is built as-of-right?, NYC Department of City Planning. March 2019.
<https://www.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/planning-level/housing-economy/how-much-housing-is-built%20as-of-right.pdf>

The City Council has an informal custom – called member deference – where the Council votes in accordance with the local member in land use decisions. This effectively gives the local Council Member veto power over zoning changes in their district, which was not the intention when the process was created during the 1989 charter revision. According to Eric Lane, executive director and counsel to the 1989 New York City Charter Revision Commission, they gave the Council a role in the process expecting it would be used infrequently. Other proposals they considered would only have allowed the Council to review projects in certain limited circumstances.^{iv} There were and are alternative processes that do not give the legislature veto power over every project.

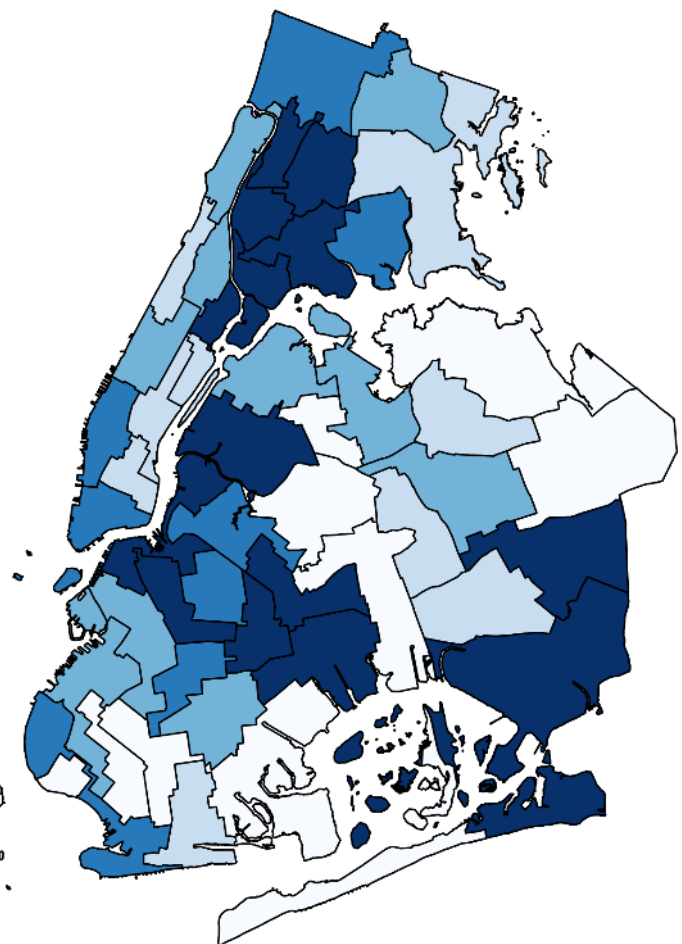
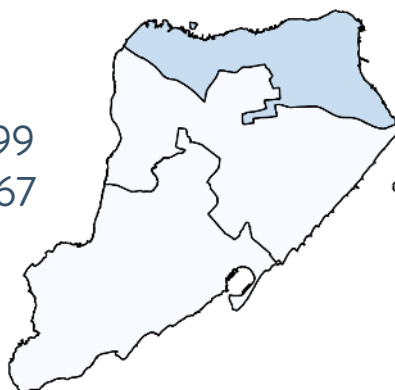
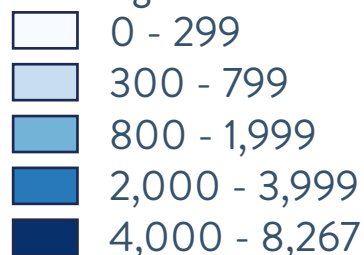
The practice of member deference, which became custom over the preceding decades, allows members to block housing, including affordable housing, from being built in their district. This is often done by a Council Member signaling they will not approve zoning changes proposed in ULURP. The NYC Housing Tracker map shows neighborhoods in Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island that are “no go” for adding new multifamily affordable housing with only 130 affordable homes on average added over more than a decade. While these “no go” areas are mainly low-density, there are also low-density neighborhoods that have been adding affordable

housing in commercial corridors, parking lots, on wide corridors and near transit that have been approved through ULURP.

Member deference also allows members to significantly delay projects in a pre-certification stage. Members may refuse to start ULURP until after an election or for any other reason as there is no formal timeline. However, a developer will not start the process until they get local member support or they risk rejection. Even HPD must wait for approval from the local member to proceed on City-financed affordable housing projects or they risk defeat of a project. While technically, the ULURP process involves hearings at the community board, the Borough President’s office and also a hearing at the Council, in reality, the local Council Member dictates the results. It is common to have little or no engagement at a Council land use hearing by any members except the local one. **For members that want to keep new housing development out of their districts, the current ULURP process offers perfect conditions to do so.**

New Affordable Housing Construction by Council District January 2014 - June 2025

Number of New Affordable Housing Units:



^{iv} Testimony of Eric Lane to the New York City Charter Commission meeting on March 4, 2025. <https://www.nyc.gov/site/charter/meetings/2025-bronx-public-input-session-0304.page>

BALLOT QUESTIONS

Ballot Question #2 Affordable Housing Fast Track

AFFORDABLE HOUSING FAST TRACK FOR CITY SPONSORED PROJECTS

Ballot question (2) would create two fast track land use processes for affordable housing.

The first fast track is for City-sponsored

affordable housing. The fast track would waive zoning for affordable housing projects, through a public review process overseen by the Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA), instead of ULURP. This would significantly speed up development by eliminating the open-ended pre-certification stage and thereby reducing development costs and risk. “Time is money” in real estate development and a process overseen by BSA technocrats will leave less room for politics to block and delay affordable housing development. Importantly, it will still include community board input and a public hearing.

It already takes too long to build affordable housing. The development timeline ranges from four to eight years or even more for affordable housing new construction projects to get financed and built. The Department of City Planning reports that preparing for and undergoing ULURP can add more than 2 years to the development timeline and require substantial time and resources from staff at both NYC’s Department of Housing Preservation and Development and City Planning. Given the dire need and the urgency of adding more affordable supply, reforming ULURP can help deliver thousands of affordable homes more quickly. The beneficiaries of this housing are low-income renters that do not have many housing options in a high-cost market.

Community Board
60 DAYS

Board of Standards
& Appeals 30 DAYS

3 MONTHS

AFFORDABLE HOUSING FAST TRACK FOR MIH IN BOTTOM 12 COMMUNITY DISTRICTS

This process will be shorter when a Council Member cannot delay or block.

Pre
Certification

Community Board &
Borough President
60 DAYS

City Planning
Commission 30 DAYS

3 MONTHS

The second fast track is for the 12 Community Districts producing the least affordable housing over the previous five years – calculated by a City report commissioned every five years. In these districts, an abbreviated ULURP process will end with the City Planning Commission and will not go to a vote by the City Council. In the neighborhoods that are building the least housing, the local Council Member will no longer have the power to continue to block new housing development.

Ballot Question #3 Expedited Land Use Review Process (ELURP)

EXPEDITED LAND USE REVIEW PROCEDURE (ELURP)

Ballot question (3) would create a faster process for small projects and modest zoning change proposals by combining community board and borough president reviews in a 60-day period, followed by a 30-day review period and public hearing by the City Planning Commission.

Community Board & Borough President
60 DAYS

City Planning Commission or City Council
30 DAYS

3 MONTHS

ELURP would apply to proposals increasing residential capacity by 30% or less or housing no taller than 45 feet, acquisition, disposition, and City Map changes related to affordable housing, and infrastructure and resiliency projects, including proposals to raise the grade of a street to prevent flooding and solar panels on public land.

The current process is a deterrent for applicants to propose small changes. It is not worth the cost and uncertainty. ELURP will entice more homeowners and developers to propose modest changes.

ELURP will also speed up disposition of city-owned land used for affordable housing. Of the City-sponsored housing projects that went through ULURP in the last decade, half of those projects conformed to existing zoning but had to go through ULURP because they involved the disposition of public land.[✓] For affordable housing disposition that requires council approval by state statute, these projects will go through ELURP with the Council replacing the City Planning Commission in a 30 day review period.

Ballot Question #4 Affordable Housing Appeals Board

APPEALS BOARD PROCESS

Community Board
60 DAYS

Borough President
30 DAYS

City Planning Commission
60 DAYS

City Council
50 DAYS

Appeals Board
NO MORE THAN 20 DAYS

7 MONTHS

Ballot question (4) would create a land use appeals board for zoning changes that generate affordable housing, including Mandatory Inclusionary Housing projects. In this process, instead of a mayoral veto at the end of the review process and the City Council ability to vote to override the veto, there would be an appeals board made up of the Mayor, the borough president where the project resides, and the City Council Speaker. This appeals board with a 2-1 vote could overturn a rejection or changes by the City Council.

The appeals board will not preclude Council Members from negotiating more for their communities. And it would be unlikely for a speaker or borough president to join the mayor in opposing Council changes that add affordability or community benefits related to a project. It will however serve as a deterrent to reducing and blocking projects that would create affordable housing. The appeal process is not available to challenge ULURP decisions for fully market rate proposals.

Ballot Question #5 Digitized City Map

Ballot question (5) would centralize and digitize the city map. Currently, the City map is separated by borough, only available on printed documents, totaling over 8,000 separate documents, and stored at the respective borough presidents' offices. This outdated system creates unnecessary delays and adds costs to development.

Many housing and infrastructure projects require developers to consult the maps to confirm the location and details of mapped streets and determine permitted height and density. This process can create long delays at Borough President offices as developers face an unpredictable queue to get access to the maps. Updating this antiquated system will make planning more efficient and save money.

CONCLUSION

Our current land use process for affordable housing remains broken. It allows local council members to veto land use changes and new housing projects, standing in the way of urgently needed new homes. The process was never intended to give the Council a role and a veto in every project. The result is that a small number of communities are building the bulk of the new and affordable housing in our city, creating a system that is unfair and failing to increase New York City's housing supply and improve the dire affordability crisis.

Given these stark disparities and the ability of neighborhood to opt out of affordable housing under the current system, the Charter Revision Commission proposed changes to advance fair housing. This November, New York City voters may consider the extent of our housing crisis when voting on ballot questions two through five to help create a more fair and efficient process for affordable housing development.

Learn more at tracker.thenyh.org

NYHC is a statewide nonprofit affordable housing policy and advocacy organization. Our mission is to advance City, State and Federal policies and funding to support the development and preservation of decent and affordable housing for *all* New Yorkers.

NEW CONSTRUCTION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING: **JAN. 2014 - JUNE 2025**

RANK	DISTRICT	COUNCIL MEMBER	2014-2024	JAN-JUNE 2025	TOTAL
1	15	Oswald Feliz	7,735	532	8,267
2	17	Rafael Salamanca	7,647	595	8,242
3	42	Chris Banks	7,225	457	7,682
4	8	Diana Ayala	6,355	107	6,462
5	33	Lincoln Restler	5,921	267	6,188
6	16	Althea Stevens	5,039	295	5,334
7	14	Pierina Ana Sanchez	4,833	273	5,106
8	26	Julie Won	4,769	155	4,924
9	35	Crystal Hudson	4,248	544	4,792
10	37	Sandy Nurse	4,302	283	4,585
11	41	Darlene Mealy	3,885	506	4,391
12	31	Selvena N. Brooks-Powers	3,876	245	4,121
13	27	Nantasha Williams	4,009	88	4,097
14	11	Eric Dinowitz	3,100	95	3,195
15	3	Erik Bottcher	3,044	119	3,163
16	34	Jennifer Gutiérrez	2,870	80	2,950
17	18	Amanda Farías	2,720	20	2,740
18	40	Rita Joseph	2,561	65	2,626
19	47	Justin Brannan	1,919	706	2,625
20	36	Chi Ossé	2,437	28	2,465
21	1	Christopher Marte	1,830	345	2,175
22	9	Yusef Salaam	1,831	45	1,876
23	22	Tiffany Cabán	1,548	217	1,765
24	10	Carmen De La Rosa	1,655	8	1,663
25	39	Shahana Hanif	1,550	37	1,587

RANK	DISTRICT	COUNCIL MEMBER	2014-2024	JAN-JUNE 2025	TOTAL
26	21	Francisco Moya	1,298	5	1,303
27	12	Kevin Riley	1,025	91	1,116
28	24	James Gennaro	1,038	51	1,089
29	45	Farah Louis	899	67	966
30	38	Alexa Avilés	821	57	878
31	6	Gale Brewer	843	-	843
32	7	Shaun Abreu	588	179	767
33	4	Keith Powers	740	8	748
34	49	Kamillah Hanks	712	6	718
35	28	Adrienne Adams	566	-	566
36	5	Julie Menin	533	1	534
37	48	Inna Vernikov	333	183	516
38	2	Vacant	497	-	497
39	13	Kristy Marmorato	487	8	495
40	20	Sandra Ung	360	4	364
41	29	Lynn Schulman	355	1	356
42	30	Robert Holden	237	3	240
43	50	David Carr	227	1	228
44	44	Simcha Felder	218	1	219
45	32	Joann Ariola	134	2	136
46	25	Shekar Krishnan	106	6	112
47	46	Mercedes Narcisse	81	21	102
48	19	Vickie Paladino	59	18	77
49	51	Frank Morano	70	4	74
50	43	Susan Zhuang	68	-	68
51	23	Linda Lee	60	1	61

NOTE: Our data shows how much affordable housing is produced in each Council District, but it is not a prediction of the 12 neighborhoods that would qualify for expedited land use review under ballot question two for several reasons. First, the ballot question would measure production by Community District, not Council District. The borders of these two different political areas are quite different in most places across the city. Second, our data covers the past 11 and ½ years, whereas the ballot question proposal would look back over five years. And finally, as the data will show, when a district says yes to housing, even a few projects can boost the district and move it up the list.